CHAPTE R F O U R

‘Beast and man so mixty’:
The Fairy Tales of George MacDonald

Fairies might seem to have little in common with the unattractive Beast-People of the preceding chapters, but no matter how different their appearance, they perform something of a similar role. ‘I[f] fairy tales, are about anything, they are about transformation’, writes a biographer of George MacDonald (1824–1905), the subject of the present chapter. According to one study of the genre, fairy tales not only symbolise ‘transformation and its borders’ and take a myriad forms, but they ‘can represent cultural as well as personal transitions’.

MacDonald transformed the fairy tale, taking the traditional form and restructuring it, ‘giving it a moral vision, without killing it’. Even the very existence of his fairy tales constitutes a type of transformation since he turned to them after writing verse, and ‘the themes which throbbed through its lines were to take other forms, notably in fairy tales and romances’. There were further transformations, moreover, for MacDonald ‘never seemed happy with his books in any form and they changed radically from edition to edition’.

Money was a determinant in MacDonald’s writing, also, for he ‘turned from writing verse to prose through economic necessity’. William Raeper quotes him saying in 1893 that: ‘I had to write for money, and prose pays the best; and I have had to write hard, too. I have always two novels on the stocks at once – I used to manage three.’ At MacDonald’s peak, Raeper records, he was paid between 800 and 1,000 pounds per novel. Creative imagination and money – the latter ‘the great corrupter’ in his writings – rub together productively, but also in tension. ‘Riches indubitably favour stupidity … poverty, mental and moral development’, MacDonald wrote. Like a number of his contemporaries (including the pre-Raphaelites), MacDonald turned to a former age for values he thought wanting in his own:

MacDonald was a vigorous adherent of the nineteenth-century cult of
medievalism, a protest against the materialism of his day. He saw enshrined in medievalism all the virtues which he felt necessary to build a Christian society … It is easy to see how repulsed MacDonald had been by the *laissez-faire* ethics of selfishness and material gain.¹¹

Although Raeper distinguishes between MacDonald’s fairy tales and fantasies, I shall treat both forms alike in this chapter because Raeper sees them both as ‘deal[ing] with transformation and plumb[ing] the workings of inner reality’, thinks the ‘leap from fairy-tale to fantasy a short one, moving from a traditional to a personal structure, but retaining the deeper purpose’, and believes MacDonald to be wishing, through his fantasy, ‘to transform his readers’ relationship with the world’.¹²

Raeper describes MacDonald as ‘an explorer of the unconscious’¹³ and observes that ‘[o]ne of [his] struggles … was to bring unconscious material to consciousness’,¹⁴ an attempt Raeper sees as especially evident in the 1895 work, *Lilith*, which will form the focus of this chapter. This observation, together with the fact that for MacDonald books were ‘portals to other worlds’,¹⁵ allows us to read MacDonald’s writing as constituting another kind of travel. On the face of it, *Lilith* operates as an example of what Mendlesohn labels the ‘portal-quest fantasy’, in which ‘a fantastic world is entered through a portal’ and is ‘about entry, transition, and negotiation’, but Mendlesohn shows that MacDonald’s tale is more complicated than this and that it moves between the other four categories of fantasy that she outlines.¹⁶

Like science fiction, fairy tales and fantasy writing are not an escape from social realities, but a projection of them. As Kath Filmer puts it:

> What fantasy does … is to confront readers with inescapable, perhaps unpalatable, truths about the human condition – cultural, social, psychological and spiritual – and then to posit alternatives which address the particular injustices, inequalities and oppressions with which the writer takes issue … Far from being escapist, fantasy literature may be at the very least morally discomfiting, its demands uncompromising, its ideals attainable only at great cost – involving self-sacrifice and self-denial, and finally the development and maintenance of an acute social conscience.¹⁷

Sometimes, as in *Lilith*, the protagonists journey between the everyday and the fairy worlds. Even when stories are set entirely in the realm of the fairies, traces of the real are apparent. Far from being a conservative retreat from the mundane, fairy tales possess the potential for radical questioning of it. In the words of U. C. Knoepfelmacher:
Addressed to both children and adults, MacDonald’s fairy tales enlist paradox, play, and nonsense in a relentless process of destabilizing priorities he wants his readers to question and rethink. The possibilities offered by an elusive yet meaningful alternative order thus replace the dubious certitudes of everyday life.18

Describing MacDonald’s ‘life-long distrust of ready-made systems and conventional assumptions’, Knoepflmacher compares the author’s intent to ‘re-tailorize’ these ‘adventitious wrappings’ with that of his ‘fellow-Scot and mentor’, Thomas Carlyle.19 It is tempting to make something of their shared nationality; to suggest that their marginal position is partly responsible for their unconventional views. Indeed, the present volume implicitly pursues such a line by following this chapter on MacDonald (which includes discussion of Welsh writer Arthur Machen) with one on the Irish writer Oscar Wilde. However, MacDonald and Wilde were very different from each other in their backgrounds, beliefs, and practices, while an Englishman who (in that sense) wrote from the centre, William Morris, wrote radical tales. National and cultural marginality are important, but political views are more so and neither should be automatically equated. In the case of MacDonald, it is true that his ‘childhood in the north of Scotland, together with his Scottish ancestry, go far in helping one to understand the man’,20 and that, in particular, the rural landscape and, above all, the influence of his religious upbringing are reflected in his writing, but most of his adult life was spent in England. As one of his most thorough biographers warns, ‘it is a mistake to read the novels with too keen a biographical eye’.21 To MacDonald, multiple shapes are intrinsic to the telling: ‘A genuine work of art must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean’, he stated in an 1893 essay,22 and his wife wrote to a correspondent who admired *Phantastes* that ‘he has always told his friends to take any meaning they themselves see in it’.23 Fixed meanings do not apply:

A fairytale is not an allegory. There may be allegory in it, but it is not an allegory. He must be an artist indeed who can, in any mode, produce a strict allegory that is not a weariness to the spirit. An allegory must be Mastery or Moorditch.24

This is one reason why MacDonald could exclaim: ‘I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five’,25 a practice that Knoepflmacher believes led him to hope that he ‘might help grownup readers shed their acquired dependence on linear time
and dissolve their sense of spatial constraints’. Imagination is key. It is imagination that discovers the laws of history: ‘the cycles in which events return, with the reasons of their return, recognizing them notwithstanding metamorphosis’. Without the influence of the imagination, ‘no process of recording events can develop into a history’. It is superior to intellect.

Oddly mingled

It is worth comparing MacDonald’s remarks on the imagination with Arthur Machen’s similar comments in his introduction to the 1916 edition of his 1894 story The Great God Pan:

The logical understanding is the prison-house of Wordsworth’s supreme and magistral ode; it is the house of prudent artifice, of the calculations of means to the end; it is the region where things can be done by recipe, where effects are all foreseen and intended. It is the house of matter and the house of the mechanism. And when youth does anything well or pretty well, it is because youth has not wholly been overcast by the shadows of the prison-walls; it is because it does not understand.

Machen says of his tale of a shape-shifting woman with satyric proclivities that

since the story was conceived and written in solitude, and came from far off lonely days spent in a land [in Wales] remote from London, and from literary societies and sodalities … it stands, not for the ferment of the ’nineties, but for the visions that a little boy saw in the late ’sixties and early ’seventies. (p.17)

Like MacDonald’s, this tale also deals with two worlds. Machen’s Dr Raymond, who operates on seventeen-year-old Mary, whom he rescued from the gutter and whose life is, he thinks, therefore his to use as he sees fit, believes in the existence of a real world beyond the illusory everyday one; a world that the ancients, who ‘knew what lifting the veil means’, called ‘seeing the God Pan’ (p.32). A brief operation on Mary will allow her to see the God Pan. Almost immediately after the operation, ‘[t]he muscles of her face were hideously convulsed, she shook from head to foot, the soul seemed struggling and shuddering within the house of flesh’. It is described as ‘a horrible sight’ that has ‘Mr. Clarke, the gentleman chosen by Dr Raymond to witness the strange experiment of the God Pan’ (p.43) rush forward as Mary falls ‘shrieking to the floor’
Again we have a text in which respectability and dissolution are conjoined. Clarke is ‘a person in whose character caution and curiosity were oddly mingled; in his sober moments he thought of the unusual and the eccentric with undisguised aversion … yet he secretly hugged a belief in fantasy’ (p.43). His ‘sole pleasure was in the reading, compiling, and rearranging of what he called his “Memoirs to Prove the Existence of the Devil”’ (p.44). In this disjunction between his public and private faces, he resembles many of those secret seekers of sin that we have seen in similar stories, just as Dr Raymond is part of the brotherhood of mad, bad, or misguided scientists that includes Dr Moreau and, at the other end of the century, Dr Frankenstein.

The irruption of nature is at the heart of social panic. (The God Pan gave rise to the word panic.) This is proved again when, one evening in London, Villiers, a graduate of Wadham College and ‘eminently well-to-do’ (p.55), bumps into his old college friend Charles Herbert, ‘his face altered and disfigured by poverty and disgrace’ and now a beggar (p.56). Herbert tells Villiers of how his fall followed his marriage to Helen. She is apparently the orphaned child of an English father and an Italian mother, and a

woman, if I can call her a ‘woman’, [who] corrupted my soul. The night of the wedding I found myself sitting in her bedroom in the hotel, listening to her talk. She was sitting up in bed, and I listened to her as she spoke in her beautiful voice, spoke of things which even now I would not dare whisper in blackest night, though I stood in the midst of wilderness … In a year … I was a ruined man, in body and soul. (p.58)

Herbert sold all his property and Helen took all his money before leaving him. Once more the ideas of the unspeakable and namelessness occur. Herbert will not tell Villiers of all that happened; otherwise, ‘[y]ou would pass the rest of your life, as I pass mine, a haunted man, a man who has seen Hell’ – and he thinks his wife did not have a real name, because ‘[o]nly human beings have names’ (p.59). Like other figures that we have looked at, she combines beauty and repulsiveness (p.64). Not long after this meeting with Villiers, Herbert is found dead from, it is presumed, starvation. Four gentlemen also die, apparently by hanging themselves. The narrator makes an explicit comparison with the Ripper murders: ‘The police had been forced to confess themselves powerless to arrest or to explain the sordid murders of Whitechapel; but before the horrible suicides of Piccadilly and Mayfair they were dumbfounded’ (p.90). A fifth suicide provides a second link with a Mrs Beaumont, whose unique appearance inspires in Austin a ‘kind of dim far-off memory, vague but
persistent’ (p.93), and whom at least the first and fifth suicides visited shortly before their deaths. The last of these, Crawshaw, had been seen by Villiers just before his death and is described by him as a ‘lost soul’. Villiers could never have supposed that such an infernal medley of passions could have glared out of any human eyes … the man’s outward form remained, but all hell was within it … when I passed down Ashley Street and heard the closing door, that man no longer belonged to this world; it was a devil’s face I looked upon. (p.97)

During the next three weeks, Villiers discovers that Mrs Beaumont, the former Mrs Herbert, and the former Helen Vaughan are one and the same. His inquiries have seen him descend to the social depths. Once more we have another example of a gentleman adventuring into the underworld:

assuming, as I do assume, that her record was not of the cleanest, it would be pretty certain that at some previous time she must have moved in circles not quite so refined as her present ones. If you see mud on the top of a stream, you may be sure that it was once at the bottom. I went to the bottom. I have always been fond of diving into Queer Street for my amusement, and I found my knowledge of that locality and its inhabitants very useful. (p.103)

In fact, Villiers learns that Mrs Herbert/Beaumont had first been known there as a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old five or six years previously and had stayed a year, gathering sickening and ‘nameless infamies’ to her name that make even the ‘worst den in London too good for her’ (p.104). After the Paul Street case, she returned for eight months, then disappeared, and returned again some months before, making regular visits. When Villiers shows Austin a manuscript that details the entertainment Mrs Beaumont provided for her ‘choicer guests’ (p.106), Austin is horrified. Villiers remarks that: ‘“Yes; it is horrible enough; but after all, it is an old story, an old mystery played in our day, and in dim London streets instead of amidst the vineyards and the olive gardens.”’ He refers to the Great God Pan as

an exquisite symbol beneath which men long ago veiled their knowledge of the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of all things; forces before which the souls of men must wither and die and blacken … Such forces cannot be named, cannot be spoken, cannot be imagined except under a veil and a symbol, a symbol to the most of us appearing a quaint, poetic fancy, to some a foolish tale. (p.107)
Again there is the meeting of respectability and sin, a conjunction that renders unstable the existing shape of things: ‘But you and I, at all events, have known something of the terror that may dwell in the secret place of life, manifested under human flesh; that which is without form taking to itself a form’ (p.107). (Granted, Villiers’s speech might mean only that he and Austin have observed this condition in others and that their knowledge of the terror is thus second-hand, but I think that Villiers’s earlier speech about diving into Queer Street makes it much more likely that first-hand knowledge is meant.) Villiers determines to offer Mrs Beaumont a choice between hanging herself and being exposed to the police. A note at the end of the book informs the reader that she died in her house on 25 July 1888, suggesting that she took the former option. In the final chapter, appropriately titled ‘Fragments’, we are presented with the translation of a Latin manuscript found among the papers of the well-known physician Dr Robert Matheson, of Ashley Street, after his death in 1892. The document, dated the day of Mrs Beaumont’s death, records Matheson’s ‘horror and revolting nausea’ at what he sees on the bed:

lying there black like ink, transformed before my eyes. The skin, and the flesh, and the muscles, and the bones, and the firm structure of the human body that I had thought to be unchangeable, and permanent as adamant, began to melt and dissolve …

… here there was some internal force, of which I knew nothing, that caused dissolution and change.

Here too was all the work by which man had been made repeated before my eyes. I saw the form waver from sex to sex, dividing itself from itself, and then again reunited. Then I saw the body descend to the beasts whence it ascended, and that which was on the heights go down to the depths, even to the abyss of all being. The principle of life, which makes organism, always remained, while the outward form changed. (p.114)

At last:

I saw nothing but a substance as jelly. Then the ladder was ascended again … [here the MS. is illegible] … [sic] for one instant I saw a Form, shaped in dimness before me, which I will not farther describe. But the symbol of this form may be seen in ancient sculptures, and in paintings which survived beneath the lava, too foul to be spoken of … [sic] as a horrible and unspeakable shape, neither man nor beast, was changed into human form, there came finally death. (p.115)

The illegibility of part of the manuscript conveys the sense of the ineffable. A few pages later in a fragment, Dr Raymond informs Clarke
that Helen, whose death Clarke witnessed, is the daughter of the Mary on whom he had experimented. Mary had given birth to her nine months after that night, never regaining her reason and dying shortly after the birth. Raymond knows that he was wrong to have ‘ruined the reason of a human being by a foolish experiment, based on an absurd theory’ (pp.119–120). He had forgotten that ‘when the house of life is thus thrown open, there may enter in that for which we have no name, and human flesh may become the veil of a horror one dare may not express. I played with energies which I did not understand’ (p.120). Clarke witnessed the end of it when he saw the death of Mrs Beaumont/Helen Vaughan:

The blackened face, the hideous form upon the bed, changing and melting before your eyes from woman to man, from man to beast, and from beast to worse than beast, all the strange horror that you witnessed, surprises me but little. (p.120)

Raymond knew what he had done as soon as Helen was born. When the child was five years old, he surprised it several times ‘with a playmate, you may guess of what kind’. He had sent Helen away; the rest of her story is now known to him; and now ‘she is with her companions’ (p.120).

Through its employment of various journeys, The Great God Pan dissolves several boundaries, including those between past and present; science and myth; reason and the supernatural; moral constraint and sexual indulgence; self-control and abandonment.

Growing up

In MacDonald’s work, too, physical form changes. Creatures are alternatively – or at once – human and animal. Gender is unstable. These instabilities press readers to look anew at the confused shapes; at the collapsed meanings. There is an element of the divine in the process. Rather than feeling defeated by Darwinian evolution, MacDonald appropriates science to poetry and poetry to God. There is no science without hypothesis, he writes, and ‘the construction of any hypothesis whatever is the work of the imagination’.29 In his works of the 1860s, MacDonald emphasised the childlikeness of God and condemned in contemporary Evangelicalism the ‘tyranny of stupid logic over childlike intuitions’.30 Certain of his writings (such as Lilith) reflect his belief that the spiritual and physical worlds are not completely separate.31
Lack of fixity in MacDonald’s work is not a direct response to social confusion, but rather an expression of religious conviction. In Hein’s words, MacDonald ‘had little esteem for attempts to achieve doctrinal preciseness in areas in which Scripture itself is vague’. Hein quotes from a sermon in which MacDonald affirmed that Christians in general were ‘far too anxious to be definite, and have finished, well-polished systems, forgetting that the more perfect a theory about the infinite the surer it is to be wrong – the more impossible it is to be right.’ The evident reason why no system of thought could be ‘right,’ in any exclusive sectarian sense, was simply that the mind was capable of containing it.

Fairy tales provide MacDonald with a form that allows for openness. As Raaper puts it: ‘MacDonald happily invited an imaginative participation in the meaning of his stories. Such openness is a marked difference from the intrusive adult voices intent on laying down the law in the Victorian nursery.’ In *Lilith*, Vane is transported to a fantastic world, into and from which he journeys several times. But the absence of definition to shapes conveys MacDonald’s moral concerns. His desire to avoid a closed way of viewing God and nature leads to an openness that extends beyond a religious conception to an intellectual one that has implications for ways of reading his narratives and seeing the world. Knoepflmacher claims that MacDonald ‘resembles those modern symbolists for whom the very instability of interpretation provided a fertile source of meaning’ and that ‘[h]is very best stories operate within a new space, a borderland in which old certitudes must be dismantled before they can be reinvigorated’. Knoepflmacher goes on to state that: ‘MacDonald’s fairy tales dramatize a struggle for endurance, a permanence that can only be achieved through full immersion into uncertainty and flux.’

But just as the real and the fantastic rub against and enter each other in MacDonald’s tales, so the physical world is present in his theological speculations. Hein notes that MacDonald hated the phrase ‘getting on’, which summarised the materialism of the Evangelicals, who ‘had come to feel that economic gain was the just reward for righteous living’. He never approved of the ‘perennial desire of the middle class to rise in the world of trade and affluence’. Like Wilde, his tales often moralise against the worship of money. MacDonald was attracted to Christian Socialism and lived for some years in poverty. He met Charles Kingsley, admired his work, and was friends with both Octavia Hill and John Ruskin. He was himself involved with efforts to alleviate the lot of the poor. It would be quite wrong, then, to dismiss MacDonald’s tales as
simply other-worldly. McGillis is right to notice the element of subversion in his writing (which feature he shares with his friend Lewis Carroll):

MacDonald’s work, especially *The Princess and Curdie*, recognizes the need to examine and question the myths with which Victorian society orders itself. The separation of rich and poor and the Victorian view of female dependence and fragility are two social myths with which MacDonald is concerned. He does not provide his young readers with an easy escape into fantasy; rather, he encourages them to think about social and spiritual matters. MacDonald’s children’s books are as much about growing up in this world as they are about preparing ourselves for heaven.39

MacDonald’s tales are more directly reflective of society than Carroll’s Wonderland.

The fantastic jostles with the everyday in MacDonald, and his readers are meant not only to learn from this relationship, but to do so by thinking for themselves about it. The relative absence of a didactic voice means that readers are invited actively to engage with the narrative. Whether this means that the process is any less manipulative is debatable – it is, after all, another strategy aimed at the same end: the moral improvement of the reader. However, it probably is true to claim, as McGillis does, that in MacDonald’s work ‘[t]he most sought-after change is change in people’; and, as Raaper does, that it ‘transforms the minds of those who read him’.40 His writings are designed so that transformation should apply to those outside the tale as much as to those within it: indeed, the physical alterations witnessed in many of his characters symbolise the consequences of moral improvement or degeneration. Religious conviction can, as McGillis suggests in the above quotation, directly affect one’s dealings with society. Raaper draws out the wider appeal of change: ‘The longing for transformation that many of his readers feel finds fulfilment in the movement from unbelief to belief, in peasants becoming noblemen, in women becoming corpses, witches, angels or saints.’41

MacDonald’s eschewal of single interpretations imbues his writing with a quality that has been seen both as modernist in its symbolic richness and as an anticipation of postmodernism in its open-endedness.42 McGillis sees the latter in MacDonald’s avoidance of closure in his stories.
Beast-selves

One of MacDonald’s best-known works is Lilith (1895). It explores the relationship of the fantastic to the real; of the divine to the secular; of beauty (moral and physical) to ugliness; of children to parents; and of man to woman. In an oft-quoted remark from his introduction to the novel, C. S. Lewis proclaims that what MacDonald ‘does best is fantasy – fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic.’43 But despite Lewis’s explanation that the ‘quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live’ (p.xii), such a statement might distract from the material detail of that reality.

The novel begins: ‘I had just finished my studies at Oxford, and was taking a brief holiday from work before assuming definitely the management of the estate’ (p.5). Education, work, property, and class are signalled from the start as significant. The next sentence informs us that the narrator was an orphan: ‘My father died when I was yet a child; my mother followed him within a year, and I was nearly as much alone in the world as a man might find himself’ (p.5). One might be tempted to launch from here into Freudian readings – as some critics have been: MacDonald was eight-years-old when his own mother died, and Hein records, a touch superfluously one suspects, that he was ‘deeply affected by his mother’s death’.44 MacDonald’s father lived on well into his son’s adulthood, however, and in any case MacDonald is using the narrator’s parentless upbringing for two main purposes: first, to set up a movement that is completed at the end of the book when he meets with everyone’s true parents, Adam and Eve; second, to place him as a man who has no place. I mean by this latter comment that the narrator, whom we shall know as Vane, lacks (apart from his time at Oxford) the usual marks of social status, an absence that allows MacDonald to judge the man positively by his own (moral) qualities.

In a scene-setting which in its air of the Gothic and its evocation of a house and family ‘of some antiquity’ recalls Poe and Hawthorne (p.5), MacDonald further loosens the narrator’s ties. Rather than providing stability, the lineage confirms one’s own impermanence:

Nothing surely can more impress upon a man the transitory nature of possession than his succeeding to an ancient property! Like a moving panorama mine has passed from before many eyes, and is now slowly flitting from before my own. (pp.5–6)
It is a curious passage, because this kind of possession can only be transitory if seen from the viewpoint of the individual. In fact, the condition described by Vane here is that of family ownership; of inheritance. In that sense, ownership can only be seen as temporary if there is a threat to unearned wealth. That the narrator is an orphan allows MacDonald to show him looking at ‘his’ property anew. The fresh perspective introduces an impression of impermanence that reflects the larger insecurity of the aristocracy. Of course, MacDonald intends a Christian homily contrasting earthly riches with spiritual wealth. At the same time, a potentially radical message about the fragility and ultimate irrelevance of material goods is delivered. The commentary is soon made more explicit. When he finds himself in another world – that which lies through the mirror in the garret – Vane wonders: ‘how was life to be lived in a world of which I had all the laws to learn?’ He has the following thought:

I had never yet done anything to justify my existence; my former world was nothing the better for my sojourn in it: here, however, I must earn, or in some way find, my bread! But I reasoned that, as I was not to blame in being here, I might expect to be taken care of here as well as there! I had had nothing to do with getting into the world I had just left, and in it I had found myself heir to a large property! If that world, as I now saw, had a claim upon me because I had eaten, and could eat again, upon this world I had a claim because I must eat – when it would in return have a claim on me! (pp.23–24)

Entry into this other world affords Vane the reflection that he owes his original world a debt. He has done nothing to deserve the property that he has inherited. He is the undeserving rich. MacDonald’s moral seems to go beyond the Victorian creed of self-help and radically to criticise those who feed off society without paying anything back. The spongers and scroungers, he rightly suggests, are those whose considerable wealth is made at everyone else’s expense. Vane’s continued hope that he can be given unearned food in his new world blatantly contradicts his new realisation that things are best worked for.

The narrator knows little more of his ancestors than that several of them were given to study, as he himself is. He is constantly seeing and looking for

strange analogies, not only between the facts of different sciences of the same order, or between physical and metaphysical facts, but between physical hypotheses and suggestions glimmering out of the metaphysical dreams into which I was in the habit of falling. (p.5)
The house, which he has not seen from the time his guardian took him away as a child until he returned to take possession of it around a month before, has a large library. The latter contains a portrait of one of his ancestors and is, he hears tell and sees for himself, haunted by a Mr Raven — librarian to Sir Upward — who passes through the closed door from the library to a closet. Vane learns the identity of the ghostly old man from his (Vane’s) butler, who also informs him that an ancient woman of the village had said that Upward was ‘a great reader … not of such books only as were wholesome for men to read, but of strange, forbidden, and evil books; and in so doing, Mr. Raven, who was probably the devil himself, encouraged him’. Upward and Raven, the woman had said, had suddenly disappeared and Upward was never seen again, but Raven ‘continued to show himself at uncertain intervals in the library’ (p.9).

One day the narrator follows the old librarian through passages, up a winding stair, and into the main garret where he faces a tall old-fashioned mirror that ‘reflected neither the chamber nor my own person’. In it he sees a strange and wild landscape and a ‘large and ancient raven’ with which, stepping closer to observe it, he finds himself ‘nose to beak … in the open air, on a houseless heath’ (p.11). He has entered a world, or call it a state of things, an economy of conditions, an idea of existence, so little correspondent with the ways and modes of this world — which we are apt to think the only world, that the best choice I can make of word or phrase is but an adumbration of what I would convey. I begin to fear that I have undertaken an impossibility, undertaken to tell what I cannot tell because no speech at my command will fit the forms in my mind. Already I have set down statements I would gladly change did I know how to substitute a truer utterance; but as often as I try to fit the reality with nearer words, I find myself in danger of losing the things themselves, and feel like one in process of awaking from a dream, with the thing that seemed familiar gradually yet swiftly changing through a succession of forms until its very nature is no longer recognisable. (pp.12–13)

The suggestion that there exists beyond Vane’s everyday world a realm that is more real — or more true at least — risks making our material world less important than it is. At worst, and in some other nineteenth-century writers, this way of thinking forces an acceptance of worldly hardship in exchange for the consolation of spiritual reward. Such a view is pernicious when the hardship is caused by social conditions that could be ameliorated with effort, but is less so when held of incurable sickness. One often witnesses the latter attitude in MacDonald’s
reactions to his own frequent illnesses and the deaths of his children and friends; and, as has been remarked earlier, MacDonald did show an active interest in assisting the poor and was himself helped from poverty many times by gifts and loans from friends. There is thus some reason to free him from the charge that his belief in another, higher world is as socially conservative as that of some. A virtue of his ideas as communicated in the quotation above is that they invite us to consider the adequacy and appropriateness of language to describe one’s environment and one’s experiences in it. The fitness of narrative itself is thus called into question. It is not just a matter of word games however. MacDonald is making a serious point about social position. Vane’s journey into the other world enacts a kind of rebirth. When asked by the raven who he is,

I understood that I did not know myself, did not know what I was, had no grounds on which to determine that I was one and not another. As for the name I went by in my own world, I had forgotten it, and did not care to recall it, for it meant nothing, and what it might be was plainly of no consequence here. I had indeed almost forgotten that there it was a custom for everybody to have a name! (p.14)

Name in nineteenth-century society, as we have seen in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, for example, means more than a forename and surname. Rather, it is one’s social status and moral reputation. The narrator’s efforts to remember his name are in vain, because in his new place one’s character will define one’s shape afresh. This revisionary impulse of MacDonald’s is hardly confined to *Lilith*. Hein notes that MacDonald often railed against the hierarchy of the British class system:

His indignation was prompted not by a desire to do away with it – he was not especially democratic in his thinking – but by the perception that it seemed persistently to invert an hierarchy of true being. In a more ideal society people would be arranged on a social scale according to their moral and spiritual qualities, so that power and influence would be in the hands of truly worthy people. So it will be in the kingdom of God.45

Such an outlook clearly has radical potential.

As does Wells in *The Time Machine*, MacDonald uses the new world in which Vane finds himself as a defamiliarising device. Raven tells the visitor: ‘if you understood any world besides your own, you would understand your own much better’ (p.25). The suggestion is that a larger vision is necessary in order to comprehend one’s ordinary environment. Travel, in both the actual and metaphorical sense, is meant here.
Another defamiliarising device employed is that of beastliness. More explicitly than in many of the other texts examined in the present volume, *Lilith* utilises animality for obvious symbolic purposes. ‘Every one … has a beast-self’, Vane is told by Raven,

and a bird-self, and a stupid fish-self, ay, and a creeping serpent-self too – which it takes a deal of crushing to kill! In truth, he has also a tree-self and a crystal-self, and I don’t know how many selves more – all to get into harmony. You can tell what sort a man is by his creature that comes oftenest to the front. (p.30)

Vane’s journey will see him encountering many kinds of beasts in his new symbolic landscape, which represents (among other things) the ‘burial-ground of the universe’, presided over by the raven, who ‘was sexton of all he surveyed!’ (p.27). It is a place, we shall see more clearly later, that seems to hold those who are dead and awaiting resurrection. When Vane flees and finds himself back in his library, he asks: ‘Which was the real – what I now saw, or what I had just ceased to see? Could both be real, interpenetrating yet unmingling?’ (p.37). His question invites us to speculate on the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds and encourages us to look for the divine in the mundane. Significantly, the library is one of the ways into and out of the other world; and when he had been walking with the sexton in a cold place, Vane had observed aisle upon aisle of couches on which sleeping things lay. He had wondered: ‘Was this the sexton’s library? were these his books? Truly it was no half-way house, this chamber of the dead!’ (p.33). The idea of books as a passage between worlds is reinforced when Vane reads a manuscript of his father’s that someone has left out. In it his father recorded a visitation, soon after his own father’s (Vane’s grandfather’s) death, from Mr Raven, his great grandfather’s (Sir Upward’s) librarian. Raven talks of the other world, his home, to which he has now established a right of way through the house. ‘A book’, Raven remarks, ‘is a door in, and therefore a door out.’ That world is not a better one throughout, but is ‘so much another that most of its physical, and many of its mental laws are different from those of this world. As for moral laws, they must everywhere be fundamentally the same’ (p.40). MacDonald’s message here would appear to be that we must practise or aspire to moral goodness consistently: that there is a universal morality, a continuum. Books, with their imagination and their poetry (which we must remember includes science), provide a bridge to this other world; the one that connects with our own. Raaper notes that libraries figure large in the writings of MacDonald, who referred in *There and Back* to
a ‘bookscape’. They are places ‘filled with knowledge and mystery’.46

*Lilith* embodies this principle, and it exhibits a transformation of genres. Raaper points out that MacDonald ‘adapted the Gothic conventions to his own ends’.47 Its use of the manuscript is just one element of the Gothic (another being the old house with its mysterious garret and the ghostly comings and goings through the library). Additionally, Raaper notes that

many of the preoccupations of the Gothic novel are MacDonald’s own – its horror of and fascination with sex, the obsession with the supernatural and immortality, the exploration of the divine and demonic potentials of the human spirit, and the whiff of charnel-houses and graveyards.48

Fantasy, writes Raaper, ‘is supremely the literature of transition, for one thing actually changes into another, though the fear was that one could become either an angel or a beast’. While ‘[o]ne of Darwin’s legacies was a fear of the bestial nature within’ and obvious figures for these were the vampire and werewolf, ‘[i]n MacDonald the constant association of women with predatory cat-like creatures reaches its purest expression in *Lilith*, who actually possesses the ability to change herself into a leopardess’. Raaper continues: ‘MacDonald’s symbols for women – corpse, ghost and cat – expose his own inner anxieties, but, according to a Jungian model, they can be applied to the human psyche at large.’49

The religious overtones are clear, if symbolic. And there are traces of science fiction, such as when Vane’s father reports Raven speaking ‘much about dimensions, telling me that there were many more than three, some of them concerned with powers which were indeed in us, but of which as yet we knew absolutely nothing’ (p.41).50 This seems distinctly Wellsian. As with other texts examined in the present book, the narrative structure of *Lilith* displays, as well as describes, transformations. MacDonald develops a generic admixture that brings changes to conventional styles and forms. The composition reflects this: ‘No fewer than eight pre-publication drafts of *Lilith* exist, and the story underwent many mutations between the first drafts and the published book.’51 MacDonald’s purpose seems to be to direct attention to the interrelationship of the two (or more) worlds. This aim becomes apparent, also, during a conversation that Raven has with Vane about the meaning of home. When Vane asks Raven to tell him the nearest way home, Raven replies:

‘I cannot … you and I use the same words with different meanings. We are often unable to tell people what they *need* to know, because they *want*
to know something else, and would therefore only misunderstand what we said.’ (p.45)

If this is read as a speech against multiple meanings, it would be at odds with MacDonald’s stress on the imagination and on the coexistence of the two worlds. And so it should be taken rather as a desire for harmony, the importance and desirability of which MacDonald underlines elsewhere in his writings.

Like Wells’s Time Traveller, Vane breaks off from his narrative to comment on it and on his situation. MacDonald has his narrator explain the problems of communicating the experiences of one world to another. Vane’s remarks anticipate by a century scholarly observations on the pitfalls of cross-cultural communication. Studies of travel and translation have shown how travellers who journey from one culture to another can only describe the unfamiliar through terms that are familiar. Concepts, people, creatures, plants, and so on, that are encountered for the first time must either remain alien or be rendered less strange by being translated into a known language and taxonomy. MacDonald’s mind may be on the spiritual or metaphysical here, but his adventures in fantasy mean that his use of travel and shape-shifting motifs helps make the point for him. Thus, Vane states, for example:

Here I interrupt my narrative to remark that it involves a constant struggle to say what cannot be said with even an approach to precision, the things recorded being, in their nature and in that of the creatures concerned in them, so inexpressibly different from any possible events of this economy, that I can present them only by giving, in the forms and language of life in this world, the modes in which they affected me – not the things in themselves, but the feelings they woke in me. (p.46)

Even this, Vane confesses, he does ‘with a continuous and abiding sense of failure’. He finds it impossible

  to present more than one phase of a multitudinously complicated significance, or one concentric sphere of a graduated embodiment. A single thing would sometimes seem to be and mean many things, with an uncertain identity at the heart of them, which kept constantly altering their look. (p.46)

He is unsure of the ability of himself or of any of the ‘communicating media of this world’ to convey even to ‘one who knew the region better than myself’ the ‘reality of my experience’ in the other, strange world (pp.46–47). While Vane is in no doubt that he ‘was actually regarding a scene of activity, I might be, at the same moment, in my consciousness aware that I was perusing a metaphysical argument’ (p.47). Like the
appearance and significance of the world that Vane has visited, the implications of this passage are manifold. MacDonald applies to the motifs of shape-shifting and transformation a reflection on the problems faced by travellers who wish to report back on the things they have seen. He employs this commentary to suggest the impossibility of passing on accurate knowledge of the spiritual world. Two issues besides the lack of a single fixed meaning are involved here: what can be known and what can be communicated to others. These matters are taken up in MacDonald’s next chapter (number 10, ‘The Bad Barrow’), in which Vane finds himself with an ‘attendant shadow’, a ‘bird-butterfly’ which ‘flew with a certain swallow double’ and whose ‘wings were very large, nearly square, and flashed all the colours of the rainbow’. Vane is so entranced by their splendour and beauty that he stumbles over a rock and lies stunned. When he comes to, ‘the creature was hovering over my head, radiating the whole chord of light, with multitudinous gradations and some kinds of colour I had never before seen’. He continues, but hits another stone as he cannot take his eyes off the being:

Fearing then another fall, I sat down to watch the little glory, and a great longing awoke in me to have it in my hand. To my unspeakable delight, it began to sink toward me. Slowly at first, then swiftly it sank, growing larger as it came nearer. I felt as if the treasure of the universe were giving itself to me – put out my hand, and had it. But the instant I took it, its light went out; all was dark as pitch, a dead book with boards outspread lay cold and heavy in my hand. I threw it in the air – only to hear it fall among the heather. Burying my face in my hands, I sat in motionless misery. (p.47)

Vane’s words are an expression of the huge gulf between superficial and real knowledge; between books and experience; between the mundane and the spiritual worlds. An attempt to capture the latter in the former is bound to fail. It is no wonder that Vane is left in sad stillness; his progress halted. Of course, there is an irony in MacDonald’s using a book, Lilith, to make his point about the inadequacy and comparative sterility of books compared with deep knowledge, but it may be countered in his defence that the world of which he writes is infinitely more meaningful.

As he walks on, Vane is confronted by several monsters, ‘hideous creatures, no two alike’, that threaten him, but from which he is saved by the light of the moon that paralyses them (p.49). They include an animal like a tiger and another like a worm. ‘In some of them, beauty of colour enhanced loathliness of shape: one large serpent was covered from head to distant tail with feathers of glorious hues’ (p.49). Heading for the hills as the moon descends, Vane sees a woman with a white mist
floating about her, which she tries to grasp and wrap around herself. She is beautiful, but her face exhibits such pride and misery that Vane can scarcely believe what he sees. Her eyes are dead. Suddenly she falls and writhes in pain:

A moment more and her legs, hurrying from her body, sped away serpents. From her shoulders fled her arms as in terror, serpents also. Then something flew up from her like a bat, and when I looked again, she was gone. (p.50)

Fleeing in terror, Vane is pursued by many dark objects, the leading one of which ‘threw himself upon me with a snarl of greedy hate’ (p.50), but they fall in the angry light of the moon. In the next chapter, ‘The Evil Wood’, Vane resumes his journey in the strange world. His passage through it is reminiscent of Pilgrim’s ordeals in the book by Bunyan that influenced Macdonald and of which he was ‘passionately fond’.52 MacDonald’s writing however is more textured, combining spiritual elements with intellectual and artistic modes, including the Gothic, Romanticism, and psychological reflection, unavailable to the seventeenth-century author. These ingredients are present, for example, in Vane’s description of looking at a forest at twilight:

Presently, to my listless roving gaze, the varied outlines of the clumpy foliage began to assume or imitate – say rather suggest other shapes than their own. A light wind began to blow, it set the boughs of a neighbour tree rocking, and all their branches aswing, every twig and every leaf blending its individual motion with the sway of its branch and the rock of its bough. Among its leafy shapes was a pack of wolves that struggled to break from a wizard’s leash: greyhounds would not have strained so savagely! I watched them with an interest that grew as the wind gathered force, and their motions life. (p.52)

In his fancy he sees in the shape of another mass of foliage a group of horses’ heads and forequarters, their necks moving with the wind. The Gothic takes over as we read of the heads:

how gaunt, how strange! – several of them bare skulls – one with the skin tight on its bones! One had lost the under jaw and hung low, looking unutterably weary – but now and then hove high as if to ease the bit. (p.53)

Above these floats the ‘form of a woman, waving her arms in imperious gesture’. Vane is unsettled by these shapes and at the thought that they might ‘overpower my brain with seeming reality’ (p.53), but darkness then descends and he falls asleep once more. He hears and in the moonlight discerns a furious battle between skeletons and phantoms: ‘Bones of men and horses lay scattered and heaped; grinding and crunching them under
foot fought the skeletons.’ In this ‘battle of the dead’ (p.53), a ghastly parody of worldly conflicts, presided over by the woman he had seen before and who urges its participants to slay one another,

skeleton jaws and phantom-throats swelled the deafening tumult with the war-cry of every opinion, bad or good, that had bred strife, injustice, cruelty in any world. The holiest words went with the most hating blow. Lie-distorted truths flew hurtling in the wind of javelins and bones. Every moment some one would turn against his comrades, and fight more wildly than before, *The Truth! The Truth!* still his cry. (pp.53–54)

The suggestion is that those who fight proclaiming to have right on their side may not, in fact, possess such legitimacy. As we shall see, this is only one of many instances of MacDonald’s use of the dream or fantasy world to cast critical light on our everyday one. As Filmer notes, ‘for MacDonald, the spiritual is inseparable from the psychological and the social’. In a way, the world into which Vane has travelled seems more real for its stripping away of superfluities so that we see the essence of things and the contrast between what is professed and actuality. The text’s criticisms, in which travel and animality play a central role, assume more direct commentary on social and economic arrangements as Vane’s journey continues. When he is befriended and fed by children who call themselves the Little Ones and Vane a good giant, he is told that some grow up to be bad giants (though rather like Wells’s Eloi they show little curiosity, understanding of causality, or desire to change). His response to hearing that ‘[t]he bad giants are very proud of being fat’ is: ‘So they are in my world … only they do not say *fat* there, they say *rich*’ (p.66). The exchange occurs after the children had watched Vane picking and enjoying an apple or two and then freed him after he had been taken captive and set to labour by two giants, one of whom ‘growled like a beast’ (p.57). Vane is tempted to stay with his small friends, but concludes that: ‘I must rise and continue my travels, in the hope of coming upon some elucidation of the fortunes and destiny of the bewitching little creatures’ (p.68). His resolve to leave is strengthened – for his sake and that of the children – after a beating by one of the giants. One of the children warns him to beware of the Cat-woman, the giant woman who lives in the desert, but Lona, who has assumed the role of protector of him and of her fellow children, whispers that the Cat-woman will not hurt him.

MacDonald has Vane learn about himself and about the society he has left behind. The lessons that *Lilith* offers have the tale conform to Farah Mendlesohn’s model of the portal-quest narrative: i.e. that more
than other categories of fantasy, it embodies the genre’s reliance on a moral universe; ‘that it is less an argument with the universe than a sermon on the way things should be, a belief that the universe should yield to moral precepts’. The narrative’s suggestions for improvement in *Lilith* operate on personal, social, and spiritual levels. All are linked. One of the conclusions Vane draws from his experiences in the other world is that he should spend less time by himself. Hungering after ‘the voice and face of my kind – after any live soul, indeed, human or not, which I might in some measure understand’, Vane recoils from the ‘hell of horror’ of wandering alone, ‘a bare existence never going out of itself, never widening its life in another life, but, bound with the cords of its peculiarities, lying an eternal prisoner in the dungeon of its own being!’

He regards

with wonder my past self, which preferred the company of book or pen to that of man or woman, which, if the author of a tale I was enjoying appeared, would wish him away that I might return to his story. I had chosen the dead rather than the living, the thing thought rather than the thing thinking! ‘Any man,’ I said now, ‘is more than the greatest of books!’ I had not cared for my live brothers and sisters, and now I was left without even the dead to comfort me! (pp.83–84)

One of the sights that Vane sees is a ‘mouldering carriage of ancient form’ (p.88), with the skeletons of a horse, coachman, and, inside, of two people who awaken as Vane looks in on them. They are a promiscuous Lord and his former wife. Raven tells Vane:

The male was never a gentleman … and in the bony stage of retrogression, with his skeleton through his skin, and his character outside his manners, does not look like one. The female is less vulgar, and has a little heart. But, the restraints of society removed, you see them now just as they are and always were! (pp.93–94)

Raven goes on to inform Vane that they had been the handsomest couple at court and still seem to regard themselves as such. ‘They felt themselves rich too while they had pockets, but they have already begun to feel rather pinched!’ Now that they cannot escape each other and there is no one else of their kind, ‘they must at last grow weary of their mutual repugnance, and begin to love one another! for love, not hate, is deepest in what Love “loved into being”’. They will ‘by and by develop faces, for every grain of truthfulness adds a fibre to the show of their humanity’ (p.94).

Vane, whose experiences have made him ‘like a child, constantly
wondering, and surprised at nothing’ (p.94), is not put out by the appearance of Raven, even when the latter’s coat-lapels fly out, and ‘I thought the metamorphosis of *homo* to *corvus* was about to take place before my eyes’ (as it soon does) (p.95).

The incident described above illustrates MacDonald’s combination of spiritual inquiry, moral examination, and social criticism. His use of the fantastic supplies him with a landscape in which these elements commingle in ways that seem at once as strange and familiar to us as they do to Vane. The beasts that the protagonist encounters on his journey enable MacDonald’s reflections on religion, society, and ethics. Often these are at the expense of the wealthy. For example, when Vane speaks with a woman of Bulika who is sheltering from the Princess’s leopardess, he asks her many questions, as an inquiring traveller would. She tells him that the people of Bulika ‘never did anything except dig for precious stones in their cellars. They were rich, and had everything made for them in other towns.’ It is, she says, a disgrace to work. In reply to Vane’s asking her how they were rich if none of them earned money, she replies that ‘their ancestors had saved for them, and they never spent. When they wanted money they sold a few of their gems.’ Asked about the poor, she responds: ‘I suppose there must be [some], but we never think of such people. When one goes poor, we forget him. That is how we keep rich. We mean to be rich always’ (p.120). The object of MacDonald’s satire is the British aristocracy.

Near the end of his journey, Vane finds (in a chapter titled ‘The Journey Home’) that harmony has been achieved: ‘The world and my being, its life and mine, were one. The microcosm and macrocosm were at length atoned’ (p.243). After his meetings with all of the creatures listed above and many others, including a great white leech (‘a pale savage’ [p.111]), and often finding himself dangerously close to being a meal for them, Vane is at the head of the army of the Little Ones and animals that invades the giants’ city and subsequently effects Lilith’s repentance through Mara, the Lady of Sorrows. Lilith is then laid to peace with Lona, the daughter whom she had earlier killed, and with other children. In the final chapter, ‘The Endless Ending’, Vane, who has Mara much with him, occupies a dream-like state, waiting to wake into the life beyond. He has not sought the mirror again, but sometimes when he looks at his books, ‘they seem to waver as if a wind rippled their solid mass, and another world were about to break through’ (p.251). He has glimpses, sensations, or memories of that other world and now he waits, asleep or awake, for that final awakening.
Lilith herself embodies transformations: ‘the persona of Lilith herself has … a long and complex history, changing and reappearing in various works of literature throughout the nineteenth century, and forming and reforming throughout MacDonald’s own work as well’. She was ‘[o]riginally a character in Jewish mythology, probably based on an earlier Babylonian figure’. She was Adam’s first and insubordinate wife. She has been figured as Lamia, vampire, demon, and succubus; as sin in Paradise Lost; and as siren. In Raeper’s words: ‘Lilith had a changeable identity therefore and writers, finding little basis for her existence, found it possible to clothe her in many different guises.’ She provides, argues Raeper, ‘a hermetic key to the understanding of all [MacDonald’s] work, for he was always dogged by this sinister figure’.

In many ways MacDonald’s works seem very different from those considered elsewhere in this volume. His tales purport to take his readers into another world, a fantastic realm with spiritual richness at a time when many of his contemporaries doubted. Similar themes and impulses to those present in the works discussed in previous chapters are apparent, however, and he offers sharp social and moral observations. No less than in those other texts, metaphors of travel and beasts propel the meaning: even if that is that there is no single meaning. The fascination with shape-changing and with the relationship between different worlds (the spiritual and the everyday; life and death) reflects an uneasy mixture of insecurity, desire, and uncertainty. Carole Silver argues that ‘[t]he Victorian study of fairy lore acts as an excellent reflector of both the dominant ideas and the concealed anxieties of the era’. We might extend the observation to Victorian fairy tales themselves.

Notes

2 William Raeper, George MacDonald (Tring: Lion, 1987), p.308. Raeper adds that: ‘It is the failure of the Victorian moralists to see this that caused their tales to be so dull and constricting’ (p.308).
4 Raeper, George MacDonald, p.315.
5 Raeper, George MacDonald, p.195.
6 Raeper, George MacDonald, p.125.
7 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.182.
8 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.194.
10 Quoted in Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.86.
11 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.329.
13 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.11.
14 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.368.
15 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.372.
21 Hein, *George MacDonald*, pp.35–36. Hein is remarking here specifically on MacDonald’s imaginative reworking in his Scottish stories of ‘materials from his own past’, but the point applies more generally.
30 George MacDonald, *Malcolm* [1875], quoted in Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.57.
32 Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.130.
33 Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.129.
34 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.313.
36 Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.58.
37 Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.125.
38 Raeper, on the other hand, suggests that MacDonald was ‘probably at heart the kind of aristocratic old Tory that Ruskin was’ and that while ‘[h]e certainly believed in bettering the lot of ordinary people, and hoped that the quality of their lives would be transformed … he did not link this into any political transformation such as the Webbs or Karl Marx sought’. Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.262.
42 McGillis identifies what he calls MacDonald’s ‘prescience for what we think of as the postmodern spirit’ (p.xvi).
44 Hein, *George MacDonald*, p.32.
46 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.186.
47 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, pp.199, 201.
48 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.199.
49 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.201.
50 The words of the manuscript are italicised by MacDonald; ‘dimensions’ is not, thus giving it an emphasis that I have indicated here through italics.
54 Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, p.5.
55 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.365.
56 Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.366. Raeper further notes that ‘MacDonald sometimes … describ[ed] women as demons or vampires’ (p.367).